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INSIDE OUR HOME

- 4** **HOME Front**
Publisher Amanda Soulodre introduces our Summer issue!
- 6** **Our Reader Panel**
For your HOME
- 8** **Homeowners and the Law**
What not to park on the street
- 10** **Going Out on a Limb**
Lofty Treehouses
- 18** **Custom Touches**
Exterior Lighting – Paths and Landscaping
- 21** **The Shaw Home**
Part 3 of 3: Tiles
- 29** **Planning Sustainable Saskatoon**
Turning right on Green Street
- 36** **Your Home's Carbon Footprint**
Who knew?
- 38** **Celebrating Native Plants**
Mother Nature knows what to plant.
- 42** **HOME Reflections**
Cranberry Flats
- 46** **Create Your Outdoor Kitchen**
All this – plus tips on barbecues!
- 50** **Welcome to the New Age of Storage**
Find more space for more stuff.
- 52** **Behind These Old Walls**
A HOME Story about a former nun's residence
- 58** **Life of Concrete**
What's your house sitting on?
- 60** **Your Summer Home Checklist**
It's a start!



COVER: See *Going Out on a Limb* on pg.10 Photo by: Pete Lawrence Photography

HOME Front



Photo: Pete Lawrence Photography

Summer is now underway and we don't want you to miss a minute of it!

You might start with our Summer Checklist (p.60), or putting in plants that are "made for Saskatchewan" (p.38). Wondering where to put all the "stuff" you want to keep but don't need over the summer? Take a look at a booming trend in storage facilities (p.50). As for storing your boat when it's not in use, be careful about parking it in the street (p.8).

If you're looking for a project, the Custom Touches regular feature talks about exterior lighting (p.18). On those rainy days, how about adding tile to liven up the interior? (p.21). Or maybe you want to develop an exceptional outdoor kitchen to enjoy those perfect summer days (p.46).

This issue also shines the spotlight on environmental sustainability. Thanks to the great assistance of the Saskatchewan Research Council, we're proud to present a two-page spread on the carbon footprint of a typical home (p.36). Then we go down to your basement to have a look at that substance we take for granted: concrete. Think it lasts forever? Turn to p.58. From your basement, we take a view from 30,000 feet up – a big picture view of Saskatoon and its planned sustainable neighbourhoods (p.29).

After all that, you just might want to pack a picnic lunch and head for

one of Saskatoon's renowned natural recreation areas, Cranberry Flats. Hometown Reflections presents the history of a place that went from a landfill to a nature conservation area – with plenty of lively controversy along the way (p.42). On another historical note, our HOME Story (p.52) features that prominent dark brick home at the top of the University Bridge.

Of course, at HOME, we like to explore all sorts of living spaces in our City, so how about a treehouse? See what happens when an award-winning architect and others decided to do it right! (p.10)

So sit back, grab a cool one, and breeze through the sunny pages of our HOME Summer 2012 issue. All I have is one request: please support our advertisers who make HOME possible, and who enable this magazine to be complimentary to wonderful readers like you!

AMANDA SOULODRE
PUBLISHER

Got suggestions? Comments? Questions?
Want to see back issues of HOME? Visit
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HOME

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Publisher

Amanda Soulo dre

Editor

Ray Penner

Contributing Photographers

Pete Lawrence

Allison Ruzika

Art Director

Tim Neal

Production & Design

Alex Whyte

Contributors

Jordan Jackson

Tom Kennedy

Chris Morin

Jeff O'Brien

Karin Melberg Schwier

Craig Silliphant

Aviva Zack

Contributing Proofreader

Donna Malinowski

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Farmhouse Communications

607 Waters Crescent,

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Fax: 306-979-8955

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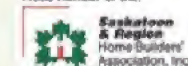
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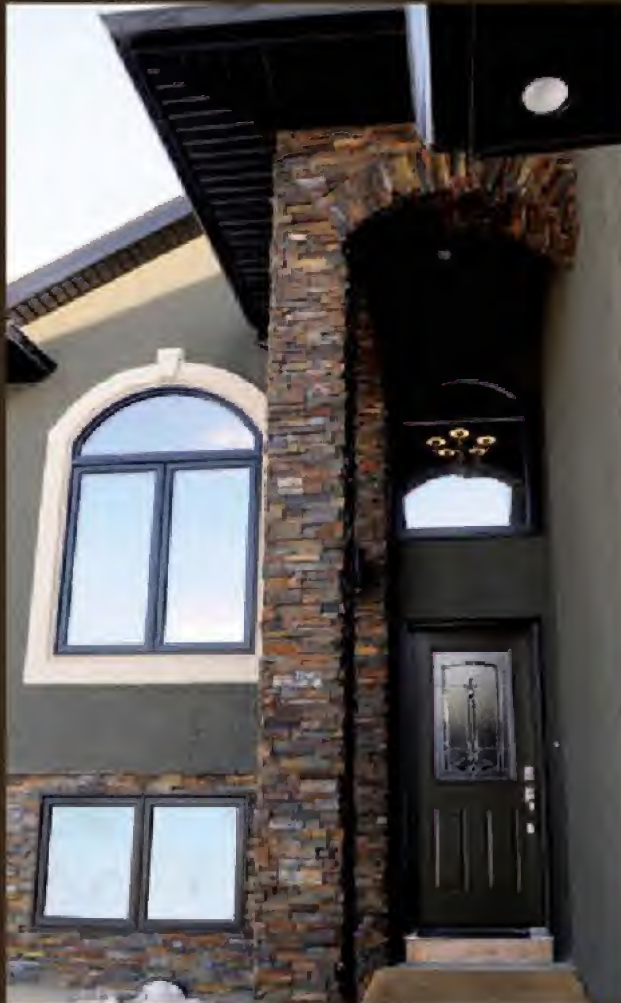
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Our Reader Panel: For Your HOME!



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former Senior VP PotashCorp and
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Crystal Bueckert

*Architectural Designer,
BLDG STUDIO INC.*



Graham Dickson

*Resource Development Coordinator,
Habitat for Humanity Saskatoon*



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Lexis Homes*



Marie Peters

*Floor Covering Specialist,
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Robert Ewashko


*Regional Manager,
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Want to volunteer for the Winter 2012 Reader Panel?

Saskatoon HOME is proud to present our Summer 2012 Reader Panel – people from Saskatoon who helped us select the stories for this issue.

We are dedicated to Saskatoon content. There are lots of great things to write about – but which

subjects will most interest our readers? To help us make that decision, we first create a list of possible topics. We then give them to our reader panel for their individual feedback and ranking, then compile the results to determine our final list.

You don't need any special skills to be on our panel, and the time required is minimal. The only qualification is your sincere opinion as a reader. Your single task will be to look at the story suggestions and rank them in order of your preference. 

If you would like more information email info@saskatoon-home.ca with the subject line 'Reader Panel'.

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Homeowners and the Law



**"Honey, there's
a boat on
our street."**

It's a beautiful summer morning. You look out your window to see a boat and trailer parked down the

street, obscuring your view. You wonder: "Is that legal?"

"It is, but only for a limited engagement," says Angela Gardiner of the City of Saskatoon Infrastructure Services Department. Section 21 of the Traffic Bylaw

7200 says that any vehicle connected to a trailer over six metres long can't be parked more than one hour on a residential street.

Dealing with your neighbour's motorhome is different. A recreation vehicle (RV) can

park up to 36 hours in the same spot on a street but then must be gone for 48 consecutive hours before it can be parked there again. In an industrial area, the 36-hour rule applies to any vehicle of any type.

When it comes to a trailer sitting on its own on a residential street, unattached to any vehicle, Gardiner says, "That's a no-no."

If you want to take action against what you think is a bylaw infraction, call 975-8344 at any time, including weekends. The dispatcher will have the situation inspected and a ticket issued if there is a violation. In some cases, you may even receive a call back if the dispatcher thinks it is important to explain the situation.

More information is available from the City of Saskatoon's website. **H**

TOM KENNEDY



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STREET NAMES



EARLY DRIVE

Early Drive in Brevoort Park is named for Spencer Abner Early (1886-1962), who came to Saskatoon from Norval, Ontario in 1906. He worked at various jobs before opening a store with J. Hunter Early in 1907 dealing in flour, feed and potatoes. Spencer Early became the sole owner in 1910. The business grew and moved twice. For many years, it was located at what is now the corner of Idylwyld Drive and Auditorium Avenue. The substantial brick building

on the corner shared the lot with 20,000 bushel (560 tonne) elevator. A successor building is now located in the CN Industrial Area on Lorne Avenue South.

Mr. Early was a Presbyterian. He served as city alderman in 1916-17 and from 1934 to 1947, and was a member of the collegiate board.

From Saskatoon's History in Street Names by John Duerkop. Used with permission from Purish Publishing Ltd., Saskatoon.

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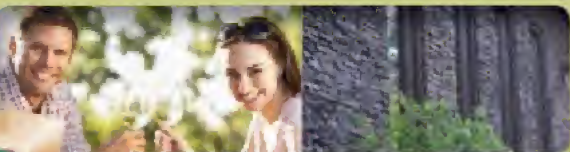
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GOING OUT ON A LIMB




KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER



PETE LAWRENCE
PHOTOGRAPHY



Today's treehouses
have evolved from
kid-built-precarious to
upscale imaginative.






Materials used don't always have to be expensive or elaborate when building a playhouse. Leighton, Davin, Charlie, Sebastian, and Julia are seen here having a great time with this "entry level" model.

The Summer of the Treehouse. It almost demands a "Stand By Me" soundtrack.

For reflective baby boomers, that all-consuming project looms large in our childhood landscape. It was a milestone when you learned important Life Lessons like how to draw plans and measure, how to use a hammer for practical tasks like straightening rusty nails, how to find the right wood, how to use a saw (measure twice, cut once), how to carry out innovative albeit shaky engineering feats as the need arose. You learned that a job worth doing was worth sticking with until it was done, despite the heat, uncooperative (or lack of) materials, and mosquitoes. The treehouse at different turns taught the value of solitude, camaraderie, scavenging, recycling, teamwork and sharing. Not to mention the wisdom of up-to-date tetanus shots.

Treehouses and forts were certainly not something we invented, no matter how much we felt like pioneers. Structures built in the treetops, 



Tree houses are for little people. They need to be safe, but built to scale so children feel it is truly their space, as seen with Alexza playing hide and seek out of this treehouse.



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Having several interesting access points to a treehouse adds a little mystery as well as function. Ramps, ladders, and a trap door are all intriguing elements.

or those that incorporate trees in some manner, have been commonplace in various cultures for years whether as living spaces, food storage, or a getaway from marauding animals or unfriendly neighbours on the ground.

From those practical beginnings, treehouses have evolved to more playful ventures. In recent years, people with money to spend have taken them to new heights. Any simple Internet search will yield jaw-dropping examples a far cry from the scrap lumber and rusty-nail versions of our youth. The character-building efforts of treehouse construction still exists, but today it seems that imagination and disposable income are the only things reigning in the new technology and design of treetop living. The style of many treehouses nowadays—to borrow from real estate industry vernacular—has gone from “affordable fixer-upper with classic character”

to “elegant sophisticated upscale dream home with panoramic views.” Granite countertops would not be a surprise.

Still, there are builders who want a comfortable and aesthetically pleasing marriage of good architectural design, childhood whimsy and a sympathetic blend with the environment. A Saskatoon family who bought a well-treed lot in an established part of the city recently hired Mark Bobyn, an architectural graduate and owner of Design Build, Inc. Passionate about repurposing the two large trees they had to remove, they earmarked one as the base for a treehouse.

“We were working with a reclaimed tree, so we had more options,” says Mark. “It can be difficult to marry safety concerns and making the structure secure with that of causing no harm to the tree.” In Mark’s project, even some of the necessary drilling and



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bolting would have devastated a living tree.

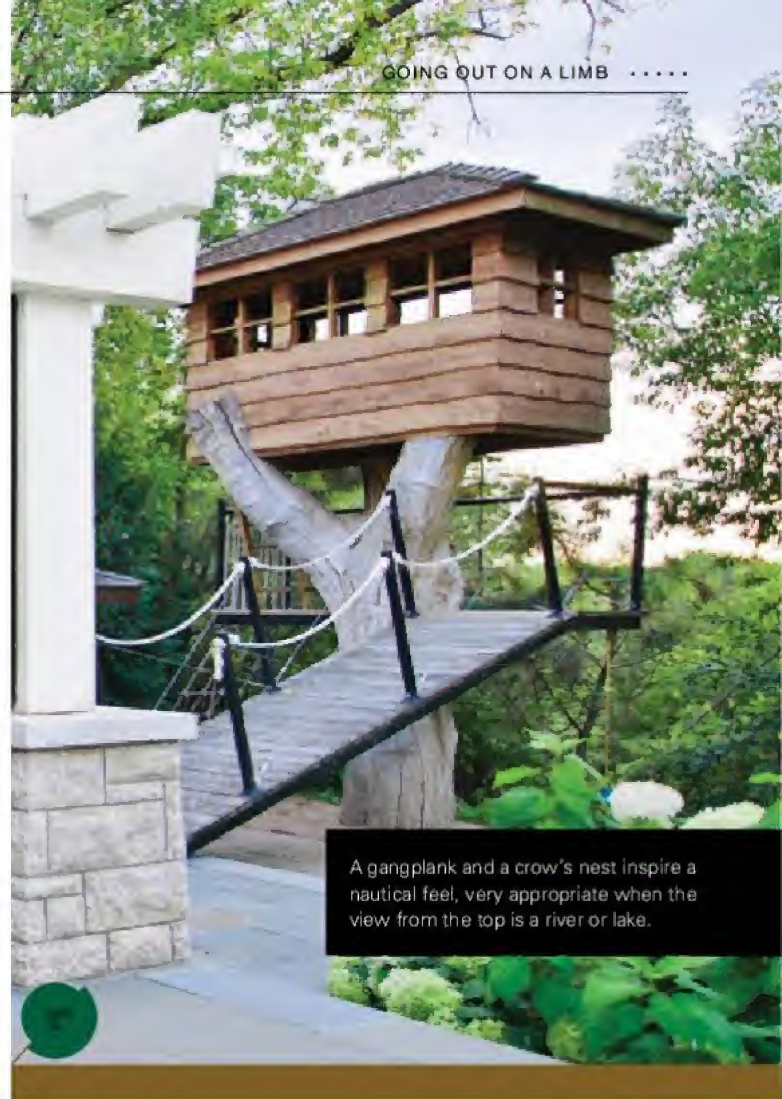
"The construction was quite elaborate. We had a drill bit made, and drilled a six-inch diameter hole all the way up through the centre of the tree," Mark explains. "We then drilled a 20-foot hole into the ground, filled it with wet concrete, inserted a very long six inch steel post, hired a crane and dropped this tree onto the post like a giant root canal." The design of the treehouse itself has a bit of a nautical feel with a rope gangplank and a hatch leading up to a small room. It's built with cedar so blends in naturally with the wooded lot and stands up well against insects or decay.

"The family wanted this treehouse to be around for a while, so it needed to be neat for the kids, but not unsightly for the adults."

Elsewhere in the city, Jeff Olfert's project began with a

practical purpose. He wanted a platform in his two large backyard trees so he could more easily trim limbs and branches. When his two sons Logan and Parker, then 3 and 8, saw the potential, Dad had no choice but to keep going. The trees were not large enough individually to support a structure, but by joining them with a beam, Jeff was able to build a "nice sized" space.

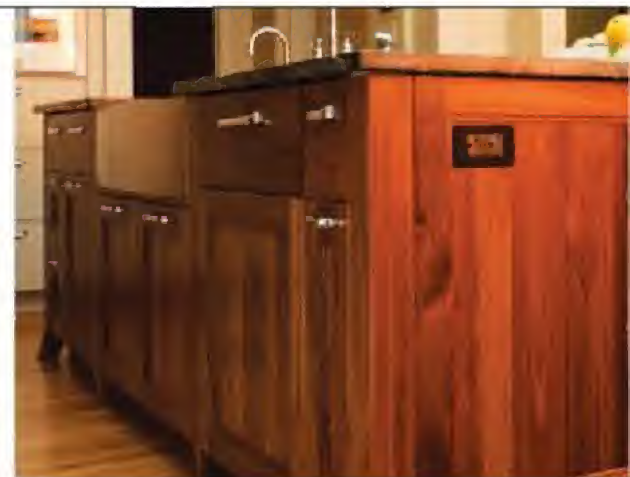
"I used treated 2x6 lumber for the floor and laid plywood over that. The kids were pretty small, so I added a safety rail," Jeff explains. "There's a platformed stairway with a curved slide. The sides are open and the roof is made of transparent corrugated PVC panels. This has proven to be a really neat feature when it's raining. When the boys camped overnight, they could watch the stars. The beam then became an easy place to hang accessories like 



A gangplank and a crow's nest inspire a nautical feel, very appropriate when the view from the top is a river or lake.



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MARK BOBYN'S ZEN AND THE ART OF TREEHOUSE DESIGN:

Saskatoon home builder and landscape designer Mark Bobyn of Design Build, Inc., obeys a few principles when it comes to treehouse design and construction:

1. Make sure you're not dealing with an elm. As soon as you compromise the tree in any way, its susceptibility to disease goes up. Reduce the points of contact to as few as possible.
2. Think of alternative ways to keep the structure aloft, especially if you're using a live tree. A lot of very elaborate designs use tensile members rather than drilling and fastening hardware. Ropes or cables are the structural elements in tension, hung over branches above and looped down under the structure. Builders must ensure the lines can move and expand with the growth of the tree. If it's a fixed loop, the tree begins to girdle the cable or rope, the tree is weakened at the pinched point, and in a storm it's much more likely to break off.
3. Scale is extremely important. If an adult is going to be involved at all in the construction, remember that this is for kid-sized people. Adults should barely be able to get in, stand up, or stoop low enough to look out the window. Any adult should have difficulty being in the space, which makes construction tricky. But when the space is small, it gives little people a much better sense of ownership.
4. Think outside of conventional design. Instead of a ladder, maybe use a rope with knots in it. Is there a trap door or secret lever? Have different spaces and levels, maybe a number of stages to get into a space. Maybe a trap door, then a bolt you have to slide, and then a crank to turn. It makes it more mysterious and fun.
5. Channel your own inner kid. Look far into your own past and think about what you enjoyed. Have fun and let your kids have that experience, too.

a swing and climbing rope. A trap door was added because no treehouse is complete without one."

The Olfert "skybox," perched on the street side of their corner lot, is now 10 years old. Jeff says it's been interesting to watch how the trees have grown to incorporate the structure. Today, the boys still use the house, especially when the family entertains. All the kids head for the trees and often use it as a diving board to reach the trampoline. An accountant with aodbt architecture + interior design, Jeff says now and then he goes up to read and enjoy the solitude.


"It's sure not like the treehouse I built when I was a kid. We found old 2x4's and scrap lumber in the back alley and nailed it to a tree." He grins. "We weren't very concerned about safety back then. It would be condemned today!"

Summer is the perfect time for a treehouse project, but a little research first can be a good investment. To avoid running afoul of local building regulations, builders should contact their municipality, town office or City Planning and Development branch. Depending on where you live, treehouses or 'play structures' may fall under the rules governing detached accessory buildings like garden sheds and garages. Even getting a nod from your neighbour isn't enough. Neighbours change and the next one might take a dim view of little eyes surveying their goings-on. In Saskatoon, call 975-2645 to ensure compliance.

For the treehouse on the wooded lot, Mark Bobyn says he was especially pleased

to involve the homeowners' children, inviting their opinions and ideas. "I believe the children have even spent a night or two up there under the stars. They haven't stopped there, and used leftover building materials to build their own fort further down in their forest playground." It all took him back to his own fort-building childhood.

"What a great learning experience for a kid, not to mention the sense of accomplishment and adventure," Mark recalls. "It taught you so much about how building materials work together. How exciting to be making your first house! It was a huge problem-solving exercise that you just never forget," he adds. "There's nothing like a fort or treehouse building to get kids to pop out of the virtual world. Put down your iPhone and grab a hammer!"

In today's real estate market, it still seems one of the most interesting ways you can go is up. The starter fixer-upper handyman special may be fine if you're on a limited budget. For those with more mad money and more elaborate tastes, there are endless possibilities for more spacious and gracious living. But whatever you build, in the end the basic appeal of treetop solitude is the same today as it has been for generations. It's still all about location, location, location. 

To see more inspirational photos to build your own backyard treehouse, visit www.saskatoon-home.ca/extras.htm



Safety is obviously an issue. Be certain your structure is secure and that the trees can support the weight. As the kids get older, you can add a daredevilly enhancement like this trampoline.

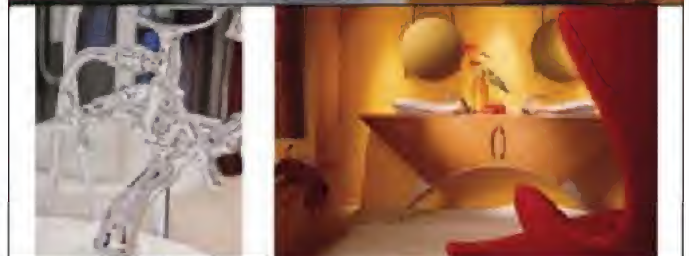


As you design the structure, remember to think like a kid again! A secret hatch in the floor allows you to keep an eye out for intruders... or parents!

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In the daytime, you can see the outside features of your home. Everything from extravagant landscaping to a simple flowerbed is there to take in and enjoy. Then the night sky sets in and hides everything in darkness. However, well thought-out lighting solutions can turn the darkness into a boon. The nighttime contrast between the darkness and illuminated

landscaping or pathways can add another layer of character to one's home.

Whether you want utility or style, Tom Levy of Vision Landscape & Design suggests homeowners consider four lighting types: fire, solar, low-voltage, and line-powered. Then think of the purpose: security lighting, task lighting, accent lighting, or general lighting. For

example, a few tiki torches, giving off a fiery orange light, are an excellent, affordable option for creating a relaxing mood for an evening in the backyard, but are obviously not suitable for security.

Lighting is not solely about application and technical details. As Levy puts it, "It's about trying to take the indoor feel of your house and trying to bring it to the outside." An important

component to that is to bring out nature by subtly drawing attention to it. This is trickier than it seems. While the technical side of installing lighting products is straightforward for those who are handy around the house, the artistry behind lighting is more complex. As Levy notes, "Planning is the biggest thing in lighting. A lot of people just put a bunch of lights in a row, and it just creates a runway effect;

it doesn't do the job it's supposed to."


Lighting done properly will have just the right amount of illumination without being overpowering. With sufficient power, a small number of lights are adequate to produce the necessary effect. Levy notes, "You don't want to create a blinding effect when walking into a yard. It doesn't create that ambient feel – that magical

feel – that lighting should have. You want to imitate the moon and the stars."


For a quick and easy way to understand the various lighting types, Levy's advice to enterprising homeowners is consolidated in the accompanying table. Keep this information in mind when considering a lighting project to style and characterize your home. **H**

JORDAN JACKSON

Lighting Type	Lighting Purposes	Light Quality	Technical Advantages	Technical Disadvantages	Price (approximate for a low- to mid-end unit)
Fire	General lighting.	Just like any open flame. The light of a fire continually flickers, which lends itself better to romantic settings, or when creating a relaxing atmosphere. Avoid setting light at eye level to prevent glare.	Different styles of fire lighting are available, from torch to lantern to fire pit.	Should not be left unattended, regardless of form or fuel source. Can be tedious to light them each individually. Needs periodic refuelling, depending on fuel type. (Ex. kerosene, propane, gel fuel.)	\$20 per tiki torch.
Solar-Powered	Adaptable, but best suited for general lighting.	A pale, constant light, best compared to moonlight or starlight.	Because the sun recharges them, no power cords are required. They are thus also very portable due to being self-contained. Can charge without direct, bright sunlight.	Run-time is around four hours. Units of lower quality will take longer to charge than ones of higher quality. Will typically last only two years. Less usable light given off per unit compared to other options.	\$10 starting price per unit. Expect to pay more for higher quality. No fuel or energy costs.
Low-Voltage	Adaptable, but best suited for accent lighting.	Any light colour is possible due to filters that can be installed on the light fixture. White or blue-white lights are best used for accent lighting. Yellow should be avoided.	Connected to the home electrical system, but uses a transformer to convert the power down to 12V. Easy to install by comparison to line-powered, as the lines can be concealed under mulch, decorative rocks, and so on.	The transformer limits the number of lights that can be powered. Buying a transformer adequate for one's current needs means purchasing a bigger transformer (or a second one) when adding more lights later on. Try to buy a bigger transformer than is needed.	\$1800-2200 for six lights and a transformer.
Line-Powered	Best suited for security and general lighting, such as for lighting house numbers. Due to electrical safety regulations, they are usually unsuitable for accent lighting.	The brightest option available. Depending on the light fixture, filters can be attached to change the light colour to whatever is desired.	Wired directly to the house's electrical system, therefore achieving the necessary brightness is not an issue.	These should be wired in by a licensed electrician, which creates an added expense and complication. Also, due to running at 120V, these are usually too powerful for landscaping use.	Typically the most expensive. The exact price will vary depending on the needs of the homeowner.



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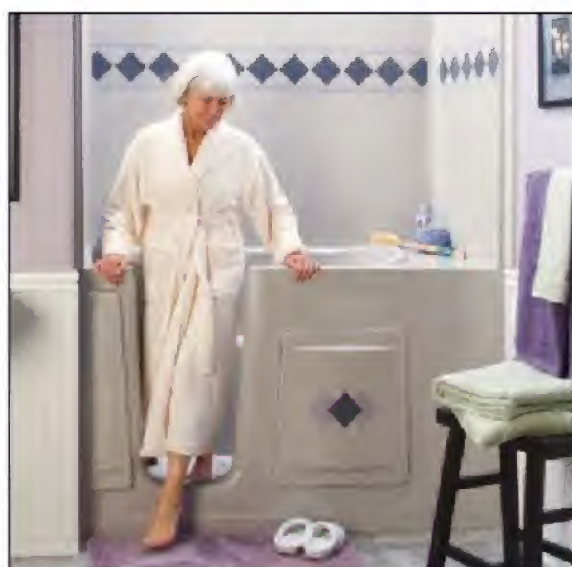
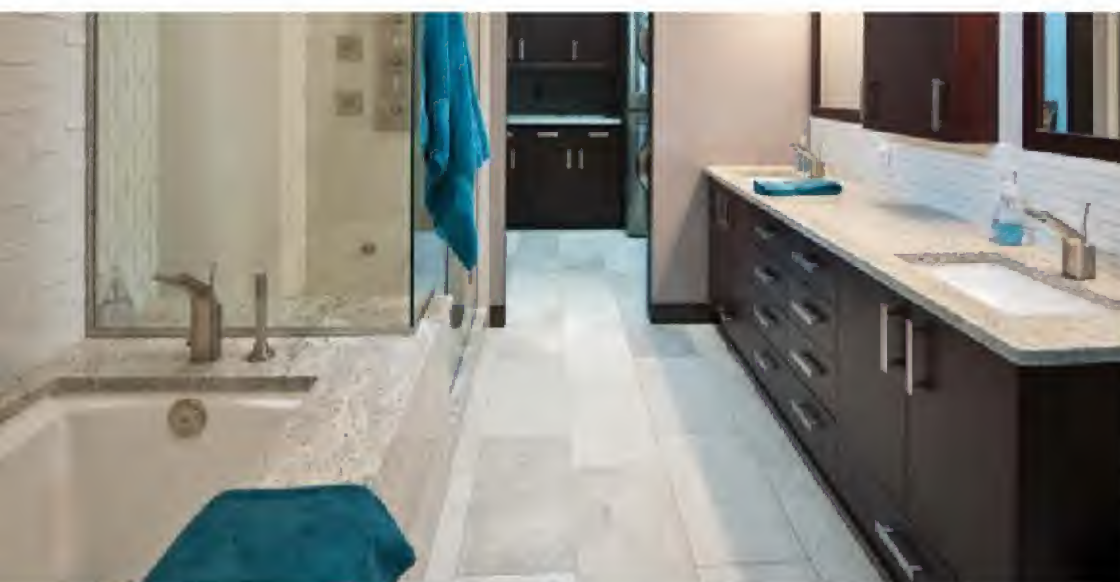


When choosing the materials for their new home, Arnie and Linda Shaw had to consider the possibility that current aesthetics could quickly leave their space looking dated. Assisting the Shaws with the design of their home, Corinne Kaye from Centennial realized that the tile flooring not only had to serve as an immediate first impression, but also had to retain an enduring quality.

Carefully selecting both the materials and the colour scheme, Kaye says that the tiles give a muted impression but anchor the entire the décor of the house.

"That tile on the main floor was selected first and everything else was selected around that," recalls Kaye. "It is a very special and spectacular floor. Right in the front entry there is a bit of a mosaic – it is all the same tile but it is cut in a pattern. It is a noir limestone so it is a gray colour with quite a bit of variation since it is natural and each piece is unique."

While the tiles for the Shaw home were chosen



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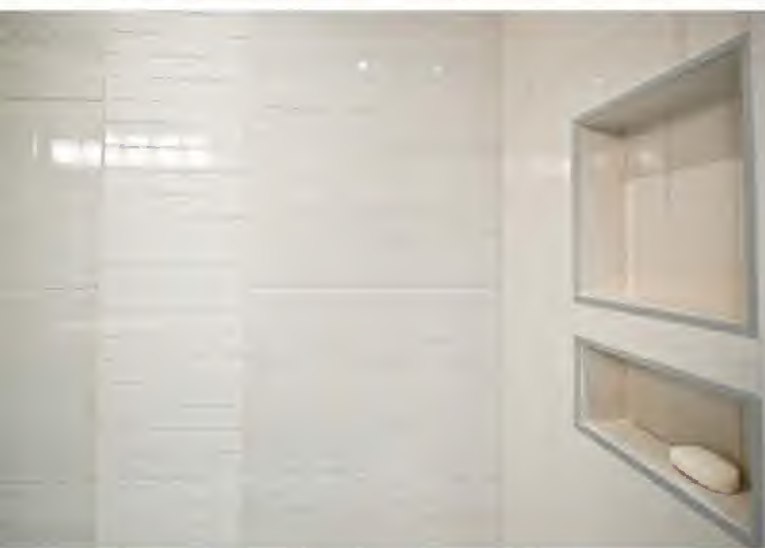
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with immaculate care and attention to detail, Kaye says that following a few basic guidelines can help anyone achieve the look they desire. Kaye also says that there are plenty of new and innovative products to look for as well as trends to both embrace and avoid.

"That is definitely something that we work with our clients to do," says Kaye. "We urge them to stay away from those trendy things, such as the little glass mosaics which are in right now – there are a lot of those out there and they will definitely date themselves. But anything in natural stone, which is itself a natural product, generally is a beautiful product and won't date in the same way.

"The entire main floor of the Shaw home was done with a natural stone and a limestone."

When in doubt, consider natural products such as limestone, granite, slate or marble. Limestone in particular is popular since it typically has a smooth surface, giving it a polished look. Many of these tiles will give your home an earthy feel. And since they can be cut to fit, they are also highly versatile and can be used as countertops, flooring and surrounds.

Even so, Kaye says it is important to make sure to check your layout before diving into a full renovation.

"When you are doing such a large area, it is important during the prep to do a dry fit to get the layout right. When you are going around corners you don't have those off-kilter cuts that don't look very good in the end. We did that to the entire main floor of the Shaw home."

Kaye also says that many homeowners consider tiles that come in sheets, which are typically a bit easier to install.

"We have a new product – a porcelain tile that comes in sheets that are very thin and measure out in a metre by three metres. These types of tiles are specifically for people who don't want grout lines in their countertops. You could even use this for showers as well."

And while natural stones typically come in a range of colour, some people still prefer products that make a bolder statement. Making the right choices will help give your tiles a timeless quality.

"Colour choices are always important," says Kaye. "We have some flashier colours available such as turquoise, although there is always the issue whether or not a



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year from now will you still be in love with that turquoise. You might be better off buying a turquoise towel and bringing that colour into your bathroom in a different way other than using it in the tile."

"There aren't any specific colour schemes that are trendy right now, but we are seeing a lot of brighter colours, or at least more than browns and grays," says Kaye.

"We also heated the floor, which is important in our climate. You should probably do some kind of enforcement," she adds. "Tile can be really chilly in the winter, particularly in the bathroom. So you might want to consider putting a heat mat under the tile."

While Saskatchewan isn't necessarily known for humidity, a factor that can greatly affect the quality of your tiling, Kaye says

that environment is always something to consider.

One final note: Even though many homeowners may want to cut costs by installing the materials themselves, Kaye cautions against tiling as a DIY-project. "We urge against people doing this, especially when using a large-format type tile," says Kaye. "Most of the tiles we sell are quite large and are hard to install as opposed to the smaller tiles you used to see in the market years ago. When tiles are that large the surface has to be quite level and flush in order to get a nice finish.

"Most people generally look for a professional to handle those installations." **H**

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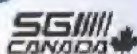
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"UP AND OUT"

It's exciting to be a city-on-the-grow, with suburbs springing up quickly, but the lack of a strong plan spells disaster for any little city that wants a shot at the big time. Modern urban planning says a city should "build up, not out," to create higher density, the way you'd see in a city like Manhattan. But many people feel entitled to their own big plot of land in suburbia, where they rule as king or queen and don't have to look upon another human being. This thinking creates a condition called 'urban sprawl,' pushing the boundaries of the city farther and farther away from the core. Anyone who has ever tried to get somewhere in Calgary in less than an hour can tell you that urban sprawl creates a host of issues.

What does that mean? Could urban sprawl really affect Saskatoon that much?

Urban sprawl can bankrupt a city, because it severely overtaxes the infrastructure. One of Saskatoon's future goals is to reach 500,000 people, but without checks and balances, even representatives of the City have been quoted as saying that we will be in financial ruin long before we reach that lofty number.

But wait! Isn't that just hippie talk? Everything pays for itself, right?

Look at a developing neighbourhood: readying the land, building all the sewers, sidewalks, and water mains, and putting up houses will actually pay for themselves if the lots are priced correctly. However, the real problems start when you wander into the realm of maintaining that infrastructure. Property taxes would need to be much higher to put enough revenue into the City coffers in order to pay for the cost of the ongoing continuance of a new area.

And worse than just maintaining the general area, are the actual services we require (or expect). Because of Old Man Winter and the fact that Saskatoon relies too much on cars compared to other urban centres, the roads are costly. Add to this the upkeep of sidewalks, sewers, and water mains (you've got to water all those giant lawns, after all), as well as expanded transit and sanitation services, and you're digging deep in the city's pockets

So how do we fix this?

The City is working on an integrated growth plan to balance urban sprawl in Saskatoon. "It's not up, not out," says City Neighborhood Planning Manager Alan Wallace, "it's up AND out. But it's about not relying so much on the 'out', but trying to encourage infill and intensification."




Evergreen is one of the newest neighbourhoods in Saskatoon, named because it was designed to preserve two rows of 50-year-old Scots pine trees. But it's not just hinging on creating a pretty urban forest. Evergreen is the flagship neighbourhood of the City of Saskatoon's foray into a new integrated growth plan, which will shape not only the landscape of greater Saskatoon, but also how we think about our neighbourhoods and communities.

A strategic plan for the sustainability of Saskatoon was adopted in February of 2012, based on the community vision developed from the Saskatoon Speaks initiative, where 10,000 Saskatonians told the city what they wanted out of urban life. The new integrated

growth plan addresses two of the seven goals of the overall strategic plan: moving around and sustainable growth.

"Those two were grouped together deliberately," explains Alan Wallace, City of Saskatoon Neighbourhood Planning Manager. "The urban fabric and the transportation needs of the community have to be linked together."

As part of the bigger picture, Wallace talks about transportation. The technical term for the percentage of people using public transportation versus their own cars is the 'modal split.' Right now, Saskatoon sits at about 95 per cent private vehicles against 5 per cent of people using public transportation. The goal is to adjust that over time to see people using 

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


more sustainable forms of transportation, whether it be a bicycle or a bus, which becomes of the utmost importance as the city pushes beyond its current boundaries.

"When [modal split] numbers change, it has quite an impact on our roadway system," says Wallace. "Continuing on our current course is unsustainable. We can't continue to increase the width of College Drive or 8th Street, yet we are adding neighbourhoods at the ends of those streets."

The Plan aims to integrate a bus rapid transit system. "We think bus rapid transit is the way to go," says Wallace. "We're nearly ready for it. We're just going to

have to adjust some of the roadways and some of the major thoroughfares to create corridors. The focus really is on the corridors and that's the exciting part of the plan."

A corridor is a major street that contains a number of people travelling each day in a particular direction, for example, morning commuters. "We'd like to see them turn into more main streets, a complete street, with multiple modes for movement," explains Wallace. "We're referring to them as 'mobility corridors.'" There would be many ways to travel down that main road such as frequent buses, walking, biking and private vehicles. 



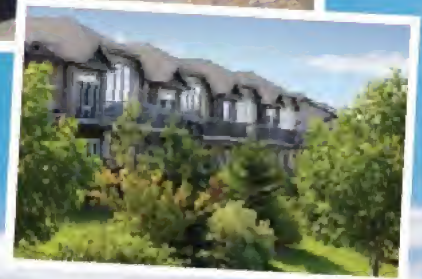
EVERGREEN

Take a stroll through Evergreen, Saskatoon's newest neighbourhood, where two rows of 50-year-old Scots Pines wait to welcome you!

Unique in its location, Evergreen is surrounded by a combination of parks, open fields and nature; including an area preserved as a native prairie remnant and natural wildlife corridor to the South Saskatchewan River Valley.

Modelled as a sustainable urban village, care has been taken to blend a combination of housing choices, open spaces and commercial opportunities in a sensitive and harmonious manner. Building a home in this environmentally sustainable community gives you a variety of green options!

Naturally Inviting



This rendering of Evergreen's Village Square and surrounding development is conceptual and intended for illustrative purposes only. It may not represent the actual resulting built form.

LOTS of information. JUST ASK!

For more details on lot availability in Evergreen or other land developments including Hampton Village, Rosewood and Kensington, contact the City of Saskatoon Land Branch at (306) 975-3278, visit www.saskatoon.ca/go/evergreen or contact your homebuilder.

 **City of
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Part of the plan will counter the effects of sprawl by creating opportunities in existing neighbourhoods in the city with plans for infill development. Although 'infill' usually refers to the idea of reimagining aspects of older, established neighbourhoods – such as a new house in Nutana – it can also mean rethinking an entire area.

"[The plan is] going to look for opportunities for infill, and at design standards which we currently don't have," says Wallace. "It has caused some of the anxiety around infill. [Infill] has to fit into the neighbourhood context, and work for the integrated growth plan as opposed to detracting from it."

Design standards can mean anything from making sure a new building isn't in a clashing style with the rest of the neighbourhood, or even ensuring that the build doesn't create drainage issues for the homes around it. But once the City can put these things into play, newer homes – even garden and garage suites – will create better density in a given area.

"There's tremendous support for the concept of it," says Wallace, "but the delivery and design are not there. We need to be able to be sure these things fit in and that they add to the neighbourhood as opposed to detract, because often we're building these things in our most historic neighbourhoods."

That's all big picture work for the City, but the growth plan is also working for the creation of more sustainable neighbourhoods like Evergreen, which fosters urban harmony through a carefully planned combination of housing options, open spaces and commercial areas.

"The first thing you'll notice is the street pattern," says Wallace. "You'll notice that there are more connection points, and fewer dead-ends and cul-de-sacs. We're paying attention to how people move around. For example, do you have to get in a car to go to a land use that exists behind your house? It's trying to reduce the length and frequency of trips."

In addition to promoting less dependence on vehicles,

the designers have also paid close attention to greener building methods, and even the situation of the houses to allow solar access. Evergreen will be able to harness the power of the sun, not only for power, but also for heating.


"You'll see some other things," adds Wallace, "like the way wetlands are considered in new developments. We're drafting a wetlands policy so that new neighbourhoods are incorporating wetlands where they can."

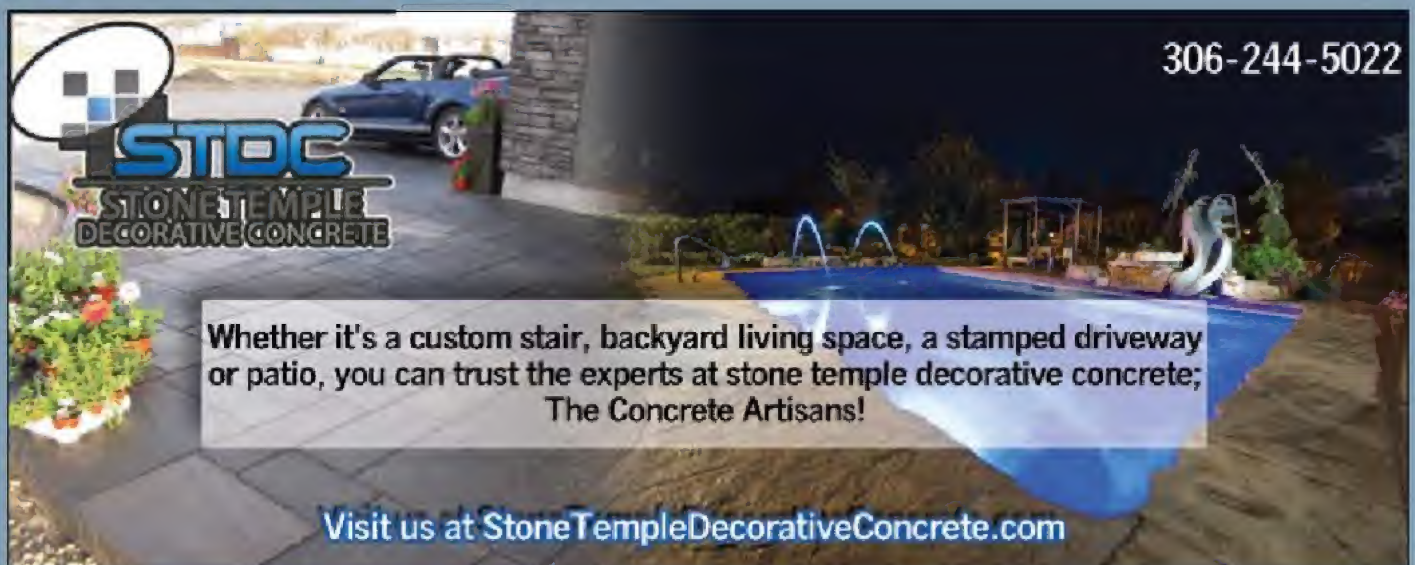
Of course, the layout of the neighbourhood itself not only discourages vehicle dependence, but also creates a better sense of community. It encourages safety and friendly neighbours, as well as a more active lifestyle.

"We've modified the park system, so there's not one core park in the middle of the neighbourhood," explains Wallace. "There's now a linear park that weaves through the neighborhood with a core park. It encourages people to get outside and it links the school sites, the commercial site, and the core park all together so

you can walk or ride your bike to that destination."

The City's integrated growth plan is about balance and choices. Wallace says that people sometimes view it as an either/or. The plan is trying to enhance choices without taking things away, something that creates a community that people are starting to care more about, as evidenced in the market.

"Developers are responding to the market," says Wallace. "When people buy a house or lot, they are starting to be concerned about how sustainable and environmentally friendly it is. It still has to make economic sense, but I've never seen a time with more emphasis being placed on those kinds of things. That's a good sign." 



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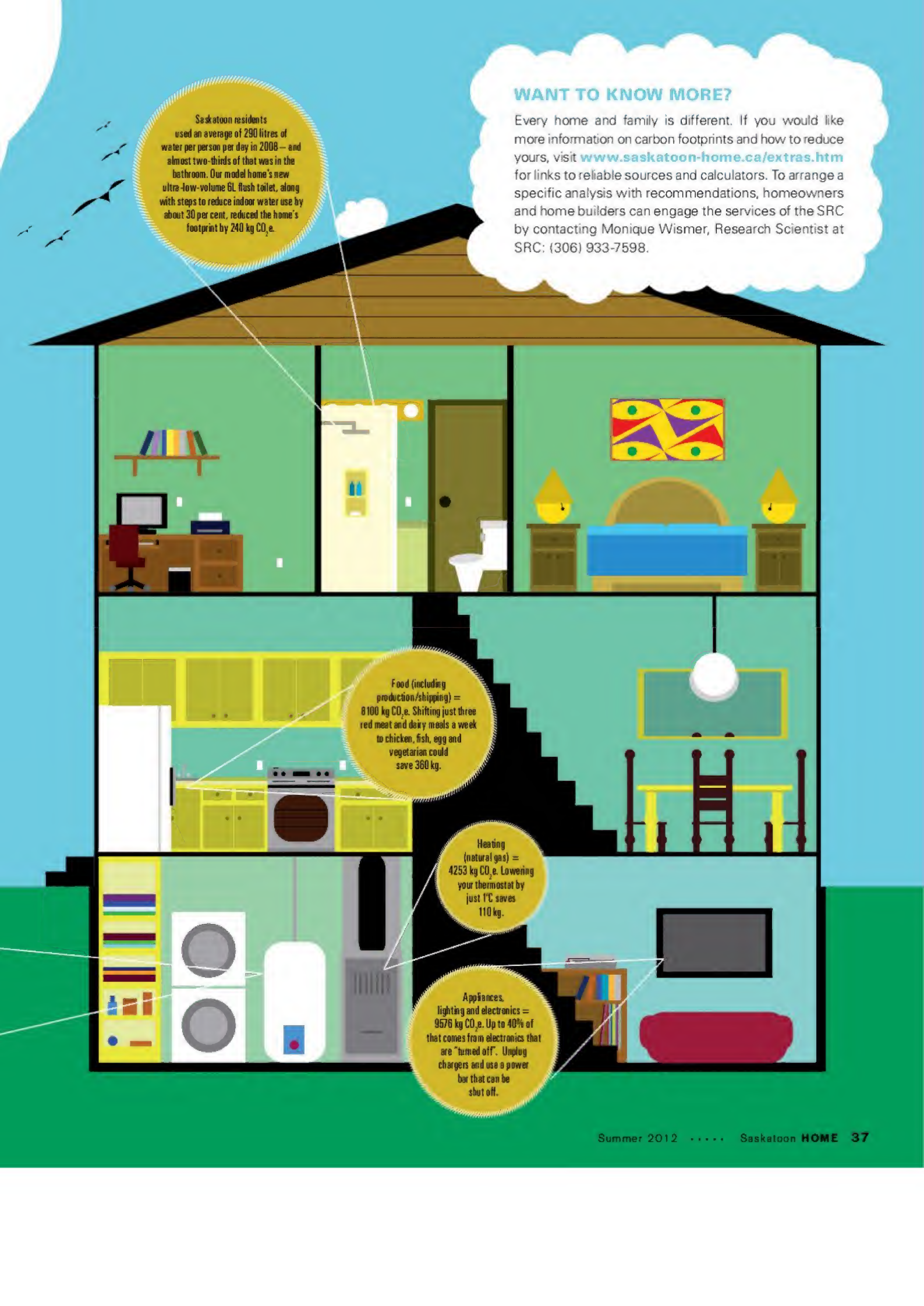
"Carbon footprint" is a calculation of the total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; it can apply to an individual, a building, or any activity. It takes all GHG emissions and converts them into an equivalent amount of carbon dioxide – designated as "CO₂e". Everyone creates a carbon footprint – how much depends on what you do – but practically everything you do will increase it. It's a useful measurement, though, to compare different activities and entities using the same scale. For example, the Conference Board of Canada has reported that the carbon footprint per capita in Canada is very high (22.0) compared with one of the best performing countries, Sweden (7.0).

The illustration shows realistic numbers for carbon emissions sources for a 1500 square foot, four-person family home in Saskatchewan in one year. Our numbers – and most of the information for this article – are courtesy of the Saskatchewan Research Council. HOME thanks SRC for their professional advice and enthusiastic cooperation!

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WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Every home and family is different. If you would like more information on carbon footprints and how to reduce yours, visit www.saskatoon-home.ca/extras.htm for links to reliable sources and calculators. To arrange a specific analysis with recommendations, homeowners and home builders can engage the services of the SRC by contacting Monique Wismer, Research Scientist at SRC: (306) 933-7598.

Food (including production/shipping) = 8100 kg CO₂e. Shifting just three red meat and dairy meals a week to chicken, fish, egg and vegetarian could save 360 kg.

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CELEBRATING NATIVE PLANTS

Karin Melberg Schwier | *Photos courtesy of Janet Wanner*

*It's time to embrace local flora.
The benefits are worth it.*



We've all done it. Anyone who gardens has coaxed along some exotic plant life that was simply not meant for our part of the world. We spent too much to buy it, babied it, spent too much to limp it along, and finally justified our actions by at least composting the sad remains. Mixing metaphors aside, there's the mistaken assumption that an expert is someone with a briefcase who comes from somewhere else. Here in Saskatchewan, gardeners are joyfully discovering – and many have known this secret for a long time – that 'experts' are growing right under our noses.

Native plants are catching on in urban landscapes. They're hardy and can withstand what extreme

prairie summers and winters can dish out. Many are drought-resistant, low-lying creepers that do beautifully in rock gardens or at the front of beds. Some are perennials, but many annual varieties like grasses will happily seed themselves out to pop up again the following season. For decades, various berries and other fruit-bearing (behold the saskatoon) shrubs and bushes fed aboriginals, homesteaders and kids exploring the riverbanks and fields. Many native plants like Red Osier Dogwood were used in native medicines. Clever horticulturalists have taken many naturally occurring plants on the prairies and hybridized them for commercial use.




Going local

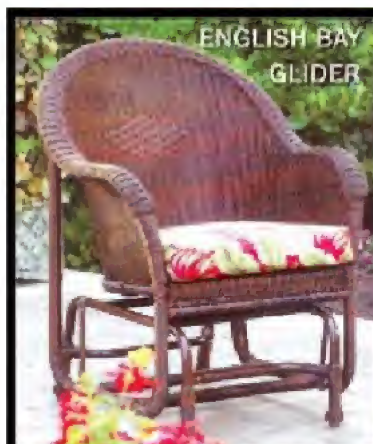
Horticulturalist Janet Wanner, owner of Gentle Earth Design Studios Ltd., a Saskatoon residential landscaping firm, is a graduate of the University of Guelph and a University of Saskatchewan Master Gardener. Credentials aside, her green thumb and love of gardening was inherited from her grandmother, a member of the McEown family, early Saskatoon settlers.

"She was an avid award-winning gardener in the 1930s and '40s. Her house was on Aird Street and some of her garden is still there," says Janet. "She'd take two grandchildren at a time for a weekend; I'd help her in her garden and she'd instruct me. In the years since, I planted Yellow Lady Slipper for her.

You will very occasionally see it in the wild, but she was able to grow it."

The list of native and naturally occurring plants is extensive. Just a sampling includes: Shrubby Cinquefoil or Potentilla, Pin Cherry, Baneberry, Crocus (now hybridized to Pulsatilla), Hops, Yellow Lady Slipper, Solomon's Seal, Cattail, Goldenrod, Black-eyed Susan (Rudbeckia), Blazing Star (Liatris), Gaillardia, Yarrow, Monarda (eases upset stomach), Lungwort (Pulmonaria), Lysimachia (a type of this is the infamous Loosestrife), Gentian, Feverfew (migraine cure), and Silver Buffaloberry (silver foliage and hairy leaves of many plants denotes drought resistance).

No matter what plants you grow, native or not, the 



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successful gardener will take into account the composition of the soil. Heavy clay soil in the Saskatoon area has a pH of about 8.3 to 8.6. Soil amendments like peat moss and compost help bring that unfriendly high alkaline level down to a more neutral 7 range, allowing plant roots to access nutrients and breathe.

A healthy respect

Among many contracts, Janet designed and cares for the Midtown Plaza gardens at the corner of Idylwyld Drive and 20th Street. Part of her plan is to represent the floral emblems of the western provinces: B.C.'s dogwood, Alberta's wild rose, Manitoba's prairie crocus and Saskatchewan's Western Red Lily. She's very fond of native plants, or varieties introduced generations ago, but she cautions today's gardeners about being conscientious growers. If you want to display Saskatchewan's lily, for instance, you can find hardy asiatic hybrids in local greenhouses. Leave the ones in the woods to Mother Nature.

"Today most of us are responsible growers," she says. "We don't want people going out into the country to dig up native plants. My grandmother went out into the woods and fields to find things, but that was in a time before people realized that wasn't a good idea," says Janet. "We're talking about finding substitutes so you're not ravaging the countryside and depleting the source of seeds."

Native grasses become hybrids like Blue Sheep's Fescue and Blue Oat

Grass and are part of the quintessential prairie landscape. Researchers are working on developing more perennial varieties. Grasses are an excellent choice for a native garden, says Janet, and many give a dramatic look in summer and winter beds. One of her favourites is the Karl Foerster, a tall reed grass that can reach four feet.


Be careful what you wish for

"If you want a good idea about what is hardy and grows well here, just take a walk up and down some back alleys in the summer," Janet laughs. "But in case you're tempted to dig up a little root of something, be sure you know what you're doing!" As the writer can sadly attest, pretty purple bellflowers do not make for a wise transplant. A nasty sort called Creeping Bellflower (*Campanula rapunculoides*) takes over under any conditions and spreads an Evil Empire of invasive roots that can take years to purge. It has been known to cause much grief between neighbours.

"The definition of 'native' varies depending on where you are in the prairies," Janet explains. "Some originated here, but a lot of plants were brought over decades ago with settlers and we've come to think of them as natural." While cactus is native in the southern part of the province, it shows up rarely farther north. Still, very low growing drought-resistant plants like pussytoes and sage have adapted to various hardiness zones. (Keep in mind that Saskatoon is in Zone 2b.)

"If you're out hiking in the grasslands, you walk on some of these plants and the smell is wonderful, but they're not really impressive at home unless you have a rock garden," Janet says. "But you can mix native plants with others for height and colour," she adds, and still pay tribute to the flora of the prairies.

Gardener, educate thyself

Ask at your local green houses and nurseries. Check the library or used bookstore. The Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan, Nature Saskatchewan and the Flora of Saskatchewan Association can offer information and resources. Do a search at the library under "native plant gardening." 

Native plant books of interest:

- *Wildflowers Across the Prairies*; Fenton R. Vance, Greystone Books, 1999.
- *Alberta Wayside Flowers*; Linda Kershaw, Lone Pine Publishing, 2003.
- *Native Plants for Prairie Gardens*; June Flanagan, Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 2005.
- *Gardening with Prairie Plants: How to Create Beautiful Natural Landscapes*; Sally Wasowski, University of Minnesota Press, 2002.
- *Creating the Prairie Xeriscape*; Sara Williams, University of Saskatchewan, 2004.
- *Plants of the Western Forest: Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba Boreal and Aspen Parkland*; Derek Johnson, Lone Pine Publishing, 2009.

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CRANBERRY FLATS

For many a generation, the name alone conjures up memories of summers long since past

Jeff O'Brien

Photo B-5799 courtesy of the Local History Room, Saskatoon Public Library

Summer in Saskatoon almost always seems to have a river attached to it. Whether we're watching a festival, riding a boat, walking a trail or simply lounging in the sunshine, there's the river, weaving its way through our summer memories.

Of all the places one can go to enjoy the river, perhaps the most alluring is Cranberry Flats.

Located about five kilometres south of Saskatoon, Cranberry Flats is a protected natural area covering about 170 acres along the east bank of the river

extending back to Range Road 3055, (sometimes known as Strathcona Avenue). There are two distinct landscape areas: the sand dunes, which includes all the upland area and the valley slopes; and the flats themselves: the floodplain along the river bank

with its beaches, sandbars, channels and islands.

Cranberry Flats is a child of the last glaciation. As the glaciers melted, a delta formed where the South Saskatchewan River flowed into Lake Saskatoon, dropping heavy sand



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particles where the moving river water hit the still water of the lake. When the lake drained, the exposed sand was whipped into dunes by the wind. These dunes are characteristic of the river banks south of Saskatoon, where the ancient delta once was. Today, the dunes are held in place by a thin covering of native grasses and low shrubs, without which they would swiftly fall victim to erosion from the wind. The lower parts of the valley slope are wetter and more thickly vegetated, including groves of trees which provide shelter for a variety of wildlife. But even here, the dune structure is terribly fragile.

Originally owned by the province, Cranberry Flats has been a popular recreation spot since at least 1943, when the Navy League of Canada established a sea cadet camp on Shepley Island (now

called Wilson Island). The Shepley Island camp closed in 1951. Starting around 1960, the YMCA leased part of Cranberry from the province to run a summer day camp for boys, and in the mid-1960s, the Saskatoon Ski Club began sub-leasing it for the winter. Other users from those days included off-road motorcyclists, dune buggy enthusiasts, and the inevitable party people. As we shall see, it was these last three groups who were most responsible for the Cranberry Flats we know today.

In the fall of 1967, the City of Saskatoon bought Cranberry Flats from the province for \$12,592.50. The city had also wanted Shepley Island. The province was not willing to sell the island, but agreed to lease it instead, an arrangement which continues today. 

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Sea cadets rowing at Shepley Island in 1946

Photo B-5794 courtesy of the Local History Room, Saskatoon Public Library

The city now found itself in possession of a small can of worms. Both the YMCA and the Saskatoon Ski Club hoped to continue using the property as before. However, the Ski Club had plans to develop it as a permanent facility, contouring the hills to improve the runs, building a chalet and ski lifts, adding snow-making equipment and putting up hill lighting. Not surprisingly, given the \$100,000 or more it was planning to spend, the club looked to the City for assurances of "undisturbed occupancy" of the land. The YMCA also wanted assurances that its lease arrangement would be continued, but also complained of the lack of policing at the site, which meant that any improvements it installed were being regularly vandalized – outdoor toilets and barbeque pits were specifically mentioned. There were also problems with litter, and particularly

with broken bottles on the beaches and sandbars. On top of all that, sometimes literally, the RM of Cory (present-day Corman Park) wanted to use part of the Flats for a sanitary landfill.

The landfill agreement turned out to be a major headache. Instead of landfilling the site – where garbage is compacted and buried – the RM allowed material simply to be dumped, creating an eyesore with litter blowing in the wind. Groups like the Saskatoon Natural History Society were appalled. There were complaints of animal carcasses left to rot in the sun, and the City Engineer called the site "a disgrace". In the fall of 1970, after repeated efforts to get Cory to clean it up, Saskatoon terminated the lease, fenced off the entrance and closed the dump, covering it over and seeding it to grass. People, being people, carried on happily dumping their garbage against the

fence for quite some time after the dump site was officially closed.

Further and more serious problems were being caused by off-road motorcycles, dune buggies, automobiles and snowmobiles. The dune ecosystem is fragile. Motor vehicles were destroying vegetation and wildlife habitat, eroding topsoil and putting the dunes themselves at risk from erosion. There were calls from groups like the Saskatoon Natural History Society for the City to prohibit such uses. Not surprisingly, the local off-road enthusiasts reacted with dismay: one spokesman, while acknowledging that the use was causing damage, suggested that the harm was confined to the trails themselves, and noted that Cranberry was "an excellent place to ride" and the only place in the Saskatoon area available for that activity. A more serious problem, he suggested, was the dumping of garbage and breaking

of bottles by the summer party people.

In the early 1970s, the city moved to protect Cranberry. "No Snowmobiling" signs were posted in November of 1971. These were subsequently torn down (twice) and in February it was reported that snowmobilers were still riding there. However, in the summer of 1972, Cranberry Flats was designated as a park and all motor vehicles were banned, with fines and other penalties for violators. This didn't stop motor vehicles from tearing up the landscape, but at least it gave the authorities a tool for dealing with them. It was not until the entire area was fenced off by the Meewasin Valley Authority in the 1980s that the problem was finally solved.

The party people and the messes they left behind continued to be a problem. The first time I saw Cranberry Flats was in the summer of

Our River: Tempting and Treacherous

It's summertime, and once again the South Saskatchewan River is calling to the people of Saskatoon, inviting us to escape the heat in its cool, clean embrace. But beware! The river has been killing people in Saskatoon since settlement here began, starting with young Neville Pendygrasse, who drowned after falling off the ferry in 1887. Recognizing the danger, the City of Saskatoon passed a bylaw that forbade swimming in the river and boomed-off a bathing area near where the Riversdale Swimming Pool is now.

Accidents continued to happen. In July of 1917, Francis Luker, arriving at the bathing area after a hot day's work, dove in and failed to surface. Ironically, Luker had survived the sinking of the *Lusitania*, an American passenger liner torpedoed by a German submarine in 1915. On August 14, 1933, Jimmy and

Reta Hope, ages 6 and 10 respectively, and their friend Janette Derkson, 14, died while swimming in the river near Sutherland Beach. Jimmy was swept out of his depth by the current; the other two died trying to save him.

Every year, people drown or are seriously injured swimming and diving in the swift waters of the South Saskatchewan River, including at Cranberry Flats. Currents can be tricky. A place where the water was deep enough to dive into one week can be fatally shallow the next, as sandbars and water levels change. Underwater snags can trap a swimmer. Alcohol and drugs can turn a bad idea into a fatal one.


It is not our intention to tell our adult readers what they should or shouldn't do with their leisure time. But we remind people that the river is both tempting and treacherous. Please enjoy it responsibly and carefully this summer.

1972 when we visited it on a family trip to Saskatoon. The most notable feature on the beach that day was the burned-out remains of an old car, mired to its axles in the sand and surrounded by the debris left behind after the parties of the previous weekend. Policing was difficult. The City even asked assistance from the RCMP and the RM of Corman Park to help in patrolling the area.

When the Meewasin Valley Authority was created in the late 1970s, responsibility for Cranberry Flats fell to it. A report in 1984 noted that nearly half of all use of the river south of Saskatoon occurred at Cranberry, including snowshoeing, tobogganing and cross-country skiing in the winter and sunbathing, swimming and walking in the summer. Off-road vehicles continued to be a problem. About partying, the MVA report said, "Summer evening use includes group campfires and, unfortunately, occasional parties involving violations of *The Liquor Act*, loud music, and obnoxious behaviour. These parties are a major

problem, particularly in the spring during graduation..."

Solutions proposed by the MVA included elimination of vehicle traffic by fencing and improved parking, development of pedestrian trails to protect vegetation, education and awareness programs, installation of garbage containers to combat litter, and installation of fire rings on the sand flats along with bathrooms and drinking water. These suggestions were acted upon and, while empty beer cases and broken bottles still happen, Cranberry Flats on the whole is a better place than it once was.

Today, 40 years after it was first designated as a public park, Cranberry Flats continues to be a haven for winter skiers and summer sun-seekers alike, a place of panoramic views and dense forest, of trails and endless beaches, and the clean, inviting waters of the South Saskatchewan River. 

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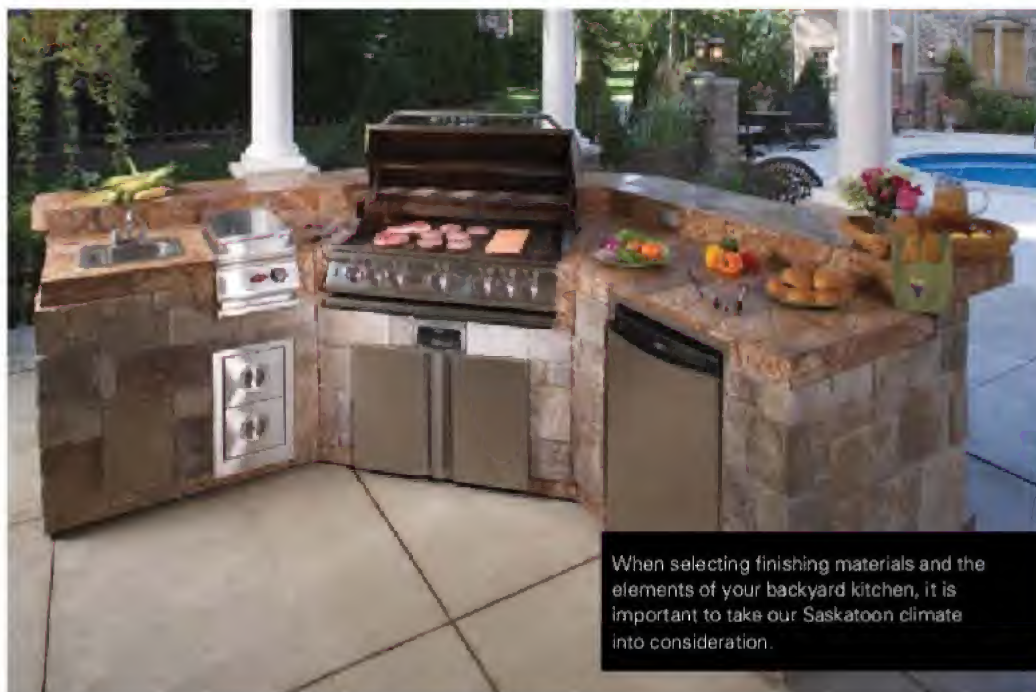
*"If you can't stand the heat,
maybe you need a new kitchen."*



JORDAN JACKSON



COURTESY OF CAL FLAME



When selecting finishing materials and the elements of your backyard kitchen, it is important to take our Saskatoon climate into consideration.

Contrary to the challenges of our Canadian winters, the idea of having a kitchen in the out-of-doors is not new, and – apparently – not completely impossible.

In the past summers of prairie Saskatchewan, an outdoor kitchen made a lot of sense. Cooking indoors meant containing the heat and smoke within one's home. The mealtime preparations for a large family or group would have doubtlessly made both the heat and smoke unbearable. Even though twentieth century ventilation systems made it possible to cook in your home's kitchen year-round, twenty-first century realities are bringing a fresh


breath of air to the idea of the outdoor kitchen as a focal point for one's home.

Outdoor kitchens are a growing trend in Saskatoon, owing in part to products and materials that are better suited to surviving our winter climate, the increasing costs of owning a vacation property, and a growing recognition of the value of the outdoor space to one's home. As Luke Rempel, owner of City Gardens, says, "People are finding the value in investing in their whole property, not just their house. They're not just doing the inside; they're paying attention to the exterior, to their landscaping. People are trying to extend the liveability and living space of their actual home."

While the outdoor kitchens of old were mainly utilitarian in purpose, they also brought a communal feeling to any gathering. This practice is continued today with backyard barbecues and get-togethers. The outdoor kitchen is thus a continuation of that line of thinking. As Rempel says, "The outdoor kitchen is usually built in conjunction with your backyard. The outdoor kitchen becomes a focal point or gathering place for the family." The backyard atmosphere enhances the meals shared together while also creating a unique feeling different to indoor dining. And so, it may just be worth it to try and capture that feeling within one's own backyard.

The basis for an outdoor kitchen is technically very simple. Says Rempel, "You start with a point in the yard where you want to set up the outdoor kitchen – usually it's reasonably close to the actual house itself." Rempel then suggests using this starting

point as the focal point of the kitchen by installing the main cooking apparatus there. "The thing that sets off the outdoor kitchen," says Rempel, "is something like a built-in barbecue. [With a regular barbecue], you're lacking the seating that might be around the barbecue, and having some drinks around where the guy's cooking." Permanent cabinets and countertops keep everything on-hand to help create that atmosphere. "As soon as you start going from a regular stand-alone barbecue to [something like] a built-in barbecue," says Rempel, "you're starting to go to what makes the outdoor kitchen." The arrangement of friends and family around the cooking area helps bring everything together and helps make the outdoor kitchen concept work effectively.

Rempel notes that the options for outdoor furniture and accessories are much better than they used to be. "Manufacturers are now manufacturing a lot more variety of furniture, equipment and accessories for the outside." There are also other options that simply aren't doable within an indoor kitchen, such as a fire pit table. Says Rempel, "It's cut out within the centre, and it has a natural gas, propane or gel fuel flame. It provides some ambiance to your table or area, but it actually adds some warmth too." It's also an option that is becoming more realistic. "Natural gas fire pits are becoming real popular in Saskatoon. Two years ago, you had to order them off the internet if you wanted a natural gas fire pit....Now a lot of suppliers are carrying them." In addition, natural gas produces no smoke 

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BBQS SIDE-BY-SIDE

While setting up and using a barbecue is simple enough, homeowners may want to know all the options that are available so they can find something that might be more to their liking. Bob Perry of Wheatland Fireplace and Martin Schweighardt of Northern Fireplace were kind enough to lend their expertise and help us compare barbecues according to the fuel they use.

Fuel Type	Evenness of Cooking	Flavour	Cleaning and Maintenance	Price	Cost of Fuel
Propane	Very even, but dependent on the quality of the burner. Watch that it doesn't flare up.	Fire-grilled, mild flavour, not rich.	Bake or scrape off excess juices and sauces between uses. Take apart once a year and blow out or vacuum debris, depending on model.	\$150-\$5,000	\$25 per propane tank, each lasting roughly 20 hours.
Natural Gas	As with propane, cooking is very even, but dependent on the quality of the burner.	As with propane, fire-grilled, mild flavour, not rich.	Similar to propane.	\$350-\$5,000	Runs off of your natural gas line. \$0.12-0.15 per hour at medium settings to \$0.30-0.50 per hour at higher settings.
Charcoal	There are more variables than propane or natural gas, but can be very uneven. Needs to heat up and cool off before and after use.	Much richer flavour. No contamination from the fuel. Meat can be cooked longer and slower if desired.	The build-up of ash should be cleaned once per year. More involved than propane or natural gas.	\$150-\$2,000	\$2-3 of charcoal per use. \$35 per bag.
Wood Pellet	Cooks via convection. No issue of flare-ups. Needs to heat up and cool off before and after use.	The wood pellets come in a variety of flavours, and transfer it to the meat. Meat is juicier than the other options.	Depending on the model, either very easy, or very complicated. Complex units have small parts that must be cleaned individually.	\$500-\$2,500	\$2-8 of wood pellets per use.



for you or your neighbours to deal with, as there is with a traditional wood fire pit. All in all, there are more and better options for outdoor kitchens than there used to be.

There may be those homeowners who want to maintain all the conveniences that exist in a typical kitchen. Rempel notes that many of them can be implemented into an outdoor setting. "An outdoor kitchen can be like a full-on pavilion, with a roof overhead, running water, sewer, gas, sinks, and microwaves." But, at



The options and accessories to develop your outdoor kitchen space are abundant. Experts in the city such as Titan Designs can help you plan your ultimate set-up.

the same time, an outdoor kitchen can have a style all of its own. As compared with one's house, says Rempel, "Your backyard is allowed to be different from a design perspective because you're allowed to use different wood and stone, and different materials that are a little more in tune with nature. It gives the backyard a softer feel and its own unique look." It is therefore possible to combine the conveniences of

the indoors with the beauty of the outdoors.

Homeowners will need to keep in mind that an outdoor kitchen must be able to weather our winters. Rempel notes that the materials used in the construction of an outdoor kitchen will need to be able to withstand the elements. He also advises that all appliances be covered with an appropriate cover, or that the outdoor kitchen is

constructed with appropriate walls. "If you cover anything, it's going to be helpful. Any time you're covering any of your pieces, they're going to last longer; they won't be in the sun getting faded." Also, any water or sewer pipes will need to be buried deep enough and may require antifreeze. Ask your plumber for advice.

Before beginning an outdoor kitchen, homeowners should

keep in mind that a lot of planning and consultation is required to make the final product match what is desired. Communication is required between people with different specialties. Nevertheless, bringing the conveniences of indoor dining with the elegance of the outdoors has never been easier. **H**

Thank you to our reader, Carla Lammers, for this story suggestion.



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Welcome to the New Age of Storage

Chris Morin

So much stuff – so little space.

With the average North American household accumulating sentimental articles, pieces of art, documents, sports equipment, business goods and more at unprecedented rates, it is hard to believe there was a time when storage space wasn't an issue.

Nowadays, storage – whether it is on site or off – is simply a way of life for most people. Some statistics suggest that the average person moves at least 16 times during their lifetime. Along the way most people

will buy the everyday things they need while bringing along the items from generations before.

One of the first players in the Storage game was Public Storage. They currently have over 2,200 properties across North America, with over 140 million square feet of storage space available for rent.

"In the 1970s Public Storage became a big thing, and since then you can see those big orange buildings in cities like Vancouver or Toronto or Calgary," says John Smith, storage expert and owner of

SAFE (Store Anything Fast and Easy Co.).

"There are over 13,000 storage facilities in North America with all the players considered. With that much space being devoted to the storage demand, you can see how big the storage business has become," comments John.

Along with the rising popularity of storage, there has been a progression in the storage business itself.

"Originally there was just a warehouse way out of town and people would have to find their way out there and would get a wooden crate and that would be that. In 1998 a company called PODS came out and they developed portable or mobile storage. They would bring a container to you which you could fill with your household items, then they would store it for you and bring it to your new place. That became really popular, and changed the storage landscape," said John.

Smith started his own storage company as a response to what he saw as an evolving industry. In lieu of providing the means to rent, Smith saw the value in providing his customers control of their storage space by allowing them to purchase the storage container and store it wherever they chose. Saving the container owner time and gas in running their storage items to a predetermined storage lot, as seen with other storage models.

"We revolutionized the storage industry by having a product line of storage containers that are for sale," says Smith. "Homeowners want to own their space. And a lot of people don't want to pay those rental fees forever.

The storage containers SAFE sells can be easily collapsed and reassembled in minutes by the owner and they can take them to the lake, keep them in their backyard or place the unit wherever is convenient for them.


"More and more people are using outdoor storage as a way of life," he continues. "And those containers are becoming more and more portable, lighter and easier to use."

The storage industry hasn't been immune to elements of sensationalism and real-life drama. Storage Wars, the reality television series, follows professional buyers who purchase auctioned-off contents of a storage locker for profit based on a brief inspection.

Smith agrees that Storage Wars has added an element of attraction to the storage industry, but cites other factors such as mounting gas prices, real estate trends and downsizing.

"All space is valuable," he is quick to add.

Additionally, according to Smith, everyone, whether they rent or are a homeowner, has a space dedicated solely to keeping sundry items that aren't currently in use.

"It doesn't matter whether you are starting out in life or you are downsizing at the end of your life," says Smith. "Everybody has a space with items that they absolutely cannot let go of for whatever reason. Given the opportunity, people seem like they would rather manage their own storage rather than paying someone else to do it for them." 



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HOME Story:



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BEHIND THESE OLD WALLS

A rich history and beautiful renovations lie within the walls of the Loewens' home

A former nuns' residence becomes a classic character home



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The Loewens' renovated Redl kitchen became their favourite room in the entire home




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At the top of the University Bridge sits a home familiar to most Saskatonians. However, 942 Saskatchewan Crescent East, with its classic symmetry and red brick exterior, has a rich history behind its old walls that is less familiar to the multitudes who pass it daily. Even fewer know how recently a family maintained the beauty and character of this prominent home, while renovating the interior to be more efficient and contemporary.

Built by J.L. Norman for Charles Nash in 1929, the home was sold to the Sisters of Service in 1946. Girls who attended St. Thomas More College on the University of Saskatchewan campus, literally across the street, lived here under Sister Mary O'Brian, who was Mother Superior of the home during much of this time.

In the late 1970s, the home was sold and divided into suites, and remained so until the 1990s before being converted into a single family dwelling.

When Diane and Joel Loewen bought the home about 15 years later, they were instantly drawn to the alluring view and central location. They soon realized that although the home was large, its design was disjointed and inefficient. And so they began the process of tackling a significant renovation to improve the functionality and modernize the look, while taking better advantage of the unparalleled view of the river valley that had first drawn them there.

Renovating a home of this age is no easy feat. "Bringing 1929 electrical wiring up to code was a challenge", says Joel. The Loewens also had



Their home renovations took full advantage of one of the best views of the city

to re-plumb the second floor to move the master bedroom bathroom so it wouldn't block their view. This brought about some major headaches, but in the end allowed them to move their bed closer to the window.

Commenting on the original kitchen, Diane says, "I have lived in homes with kitchens much smaller than were by far more efficient. It boggled my mind that something so big could be so inefficient." A primary focus was working with Redl Kitchens to design what Diane calls "a thoughtful kitchen". What was once a dated space closed off from the rest of the home became the central gathering area – and the Loewens' favourite part of their home.

Their first big decision in their renovation plans was to blow out the wall separating the kitchen and dining room, to take advantage of the view from the kitchen. Laura Dureault, the designer from Redl Kitchens, worked tirelessly with the Loewens to create a multifunctional space that "needed to be modern but also honour the classic in the home."

The Loewens chose design elements with simple

lines that wouldn't compete with the home's traditional features. They selected white cabinetry for a classic look that kept the space bright. Redl created customized cabinets with multiple pull-outs so that absolutely everything had a place.

They opted for Carrera marble for their countertops and large island, an Italian marble used in Ancient Rome, tying into the traditional elements of their home. They decided to use marmoleum for their flooring, an eco-friendly and classic version of linoleum which is both durable and easy to clean.

During their extensive kitchen renovation, some of their radiators had to be removed. To replace the lost heaters, they chose in-floor heating, which is a welcome luxury during frigid prairie winters.

Because no expense was spared in the design of their kitchen, it truly became the multi-purpose space they had envisioned. Their kitchen was not only an enjoyable place to cook, but an office, a breakfast nook, a mudroom and an area to entertain.

In this style of home, there are often small balconies





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TOP THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN RENOVATING AN OLDER HOME TO MAINTAIN ITS CHARACTER

- Find good tradespeople, especially a general contractor with experience renovating older homes.
- Choose products and finishes that compliment or are true to the age of the home.
- Ensure wiring, plumbing, electrical and the foundation are solid before beginning any renovations.



above the main entrance. Wanting to keep traditional elements while maximizing their view, they swapped the upstairs main bathroom window for a door leading to a small area for enjoying the landscape from above.

Although their extensive renovations were almost exclusively within their home, the Loewens did tackle a project on the exterior that required attention to detail. They converted the two remaining suites in the basement into a pilates studio for Diane's business, which required an exterior entrance for clients. "There was a chimney on the home that was not being used, so it was removed brick by brick," said Diane. They recycled hundreds of original bricks by hand-sanding each one, using them to create an entrance to her studio that would mesh with the rest of the home. They also added a third white pillar to tie into the two feature pillars at the front of the home.

"We had a demolition party with friends and that was really special. They helped us to hand-sand bricks and gut the kitchen and pull out old carpets," says Diane.

People made all the difference during the six months the Loewens were renovating their home. Their general contractor Manny Reis from Reis Contracting was invaluable to them. "They made hard decisions less hard, and expensive decisions less expensive because of their wisdom and insight," says Diane.

Joel agrees. When asked his advice to others tackling similar home renovations, he quickly responds, "Use a knowledgeable general contractor".

The journey to improve their character home was not without many minor challenges. (It took five attempts to properly hang and center a bathroom mirror; four times it broke and had to be reordered.) But Diane says it was all worth it. The natural beauty of the home was carefully maintained, and the efficiency as a single family dwelling greatly improved. Best of all, the Loewens created a space that truly takes advantage of one of the most beautiful views in Saskatoon. **H**

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Life of Concrete

Craig Silliphant

Sure it's dull –
until it starts
to crumble.

When my wife and I bought our home in one of Saskatoon's historical neighbourhoods, I started to wonder about foundations in the older houses. The home inspector told us that the concrete from the early 1900s had a shelf life of about 100 years. Seeing as many of these character homes are nearing that age, I had almost comical visions of old neighborhoods collapsing all at once, home after home, crumbling on their own weight.

"It can be much longer than that," says Cliff Rempel, P.Eng., co-owner and principle engineer at Rempel Engineering. "I've been in basements that were close to 100 years old where the concrete has very little deterioration. So, the shelf life varies, but I can

certainly tell you that there are a lot of homes in that 80 to a 100-year range that are having problems."

There can be several reasons for the failure of the foundation of a home – for example, concrete that was mixed improperly in the first place. But one of the biggest factors is simply that sulfate-resistant cement hadn't been invented at the time. Sulfates in the soil are carried through the porous concrete by water and create a chemical reaction called 'sulfate attack' that weakens the walls over time.

"Often you'll see the light, powdery substance on the inside surface of your basement," says Rempel. "That's an indication of minerals passing through your concrete."

Rempel sees other gaffes of epic proportions in basements; engineers weren't part of residential builds until recently, and there are many houses that don't have proper support in the concrete, which can cause cracks. You don't have to have an older home to fall prey to this particular and costly madness.

"Ironically, I go into houses that were built in the '70s and are having problems because there's no vertical reinforcement," says Rempel, "and that's only 40 years ago. Now [the homeowner] is forced to fix their house [at great cost] because of a hundred or two hundred dollars worth of rebar."

Rempel also mentions the failure in houses with basements built from

segmented concrete blocks. Many of these dwellings were built in the '60s, using this method to save money – but science, once again, has the last laugh.

"I'm not sure who taught these guys their physics," says Rempel, "but whoever did dropped the ball. They didn't realize these walls would have a lateral pressure from the soil. That pressure ends up pushing these walls in. I had [a client] whose wall has moved three inches."

You can fix these issues, with some methods working better than others – the better ones being more expensive. Full replacement of the foundation involves lifting the house off the foundation and putting in a brand new basement (using modern sulfate-resistant concrete,

of course). This is the most effective, but also the most costly, running you into the \$100,000 range.

The second method is to cast a new concrete wall inside the deteriorating wall for support. Some choose this option because their budget demands it. It costs \$30,000 - \$40,000 in an average sized house.

"We always tell them that this isn't a permanent solution," explains Rempel. "It might add 50 years to your house, but it's not going to be like putting in a new wall."

There are other methods that an engineer can recommend, but one of the best things you can do is avert the damage before it spirals out of control by maintaining your foundation. Remember: water is the enemy.

"Many houses don't have positive drainage away from the home," says Rempel, "It's actually negative drainage."

There are a myriad of methods you can use to create positive drainage, including grading your land so water runs away from the house, putting in weeping tile or even a rubberized membrane, and making sure your eaves are emptying a good 15 feet away from the house. Ultimately, there are a lot of variables involved, so each house really has its own concrete expiration date.

"As engineers, we never like to put a date on anything," laughs Rempel. "Like the end of the world, putting a date on it just means you're liable to be wrong." **H**

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YOUR SUMMER HOME CHECKLIST



JEFF O'BRIEN

Every season brings new challenges to the homeowner. Here's a modest "To Do" list for this summer.

Check the air conditioner:

Air conditioners function best when they're clean and well-maintained. See that nothing is leaning up against them or otherwise impeding the free flow of air. Many of us depend on our air conditioners to keep our houses comfortable on those blisteringly-hot Saskatoon summer days, and a clean one does a better job of cooling your house than one that is clogged with leaves and dirt. Regular servicing will result in more efficient operation which will save you money. Think of it as an investment. By the way, air conditioners are a lot more efficient than they used to be. An installer we know suggests

that there are no savings to replacing a 10-year-old unit, but if yours is pushing 20, it's time to go shopping.

Change the furnace filter:

This should be done regularly in any case. But it's easy to forget about it, and your unit will run more efficiently (saving you money) if the furnace filter is clean.

Invest some time in lawn care:


The heat of summer can create huge stress on your lawn. Lawn maintenance doesn't end with running the mower over it every week or so. Lawns need regular watering, especially in hot weather. In the summer, our water use doubles, with half of all the water from our taps going onto our lawns.

To reduce this, sprinklers should be run in the cooler part of the day, and only on windless days, to minimize the amount of water lost to evaporation. Lawns also need regular infusions of fertilizers and herbicides to maintain that lush, golf-course green. Maybe this is the year to think about replacing that thirsty lawn with something else.

Summer is storm season. Is your house waterproof?

Summer thunderstorms can dump several inches of rain in a very short time, overwhelming the storm sewer system and leading to flooded basements, particularly for houses in low-lying areas. Is your house ready for the next big rainstorm? The best way to keep water out of your basement is by keeping it away from your house,

which means checking your landscaping, looking for low spots along the foundation walls, ensuring that the eavestroughs are clean and in good repair, and that downspouts take the water far enough away from the house to prevent backflow.

While you're at it, check your basement storage spaces. Cardboard boxes sitting directly on the floor are at risk from even the smallest of floods. Putting your stored boxes up on 2x2 lumber is a cheap and easy way to get them off the floor, and can mean the difference between a minor annoyance and a major problem. Rubber and plastic storage containers will also protect your valuables from the ravages of water, whatever the season or the cause. 

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Are your drains clear?

House drains, particularly in older houses, are susceptible to being clogged by tree roots, which can grow in through tiny cracks and other openings. Once inside your drains, they tend to do quite well, and can eventually clog or even break your pipes. Not fun! A little preventative maintenance can go a long way here. Slow-flowing drains are a good indicator that you have a problem. A plumber with a special auger can make quick work of any blockages.

To the Dump!

What better time for a dump run than the summer, when you can skip the long line-ups at the landfill by scheduling your trip for a workday morning during your summer holidays? Clutter tends to pile up, in our

garages and basements, in odd corners of our yards and even piled against the fence in the back alleys. Take a morning, borrow your brother-in-law and his truck, and go see the friendly faces at the Saskatoon Landfill. But first – what do you have that you can reuse or recycle? Is it time to hold a garage sale? One man's junk, as they say, is another man's treasure. Help yourself and your city by looking for ways of disposing unwanted items without simply throwing them in the trash. 

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